

[Home](#) > [Residents](#) > [Education and schools](#) > [Local offer](#) > [Early help](#)

Early help

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Early help in Blackpool is our approach to working with children and families with a range, or a combination of, social, health or educational needs as soon as problems arise.

Families should be supported to understand their children's and their own needs or problems and be provided with advice, guidance, support and services to help them before higher levels of support or services are needed.

It is useful to think of early hHelp as:

The right help

By undertaking strong assessments with children and their families and using these to understand their needs and planning effectively to support them.

The right time

Offering help as soon as needs and problems begin and before any higher levels or specialist services are needed or when a child or family ask for it.

The right people

Early help works best when those people who know the family well or speak to the regularly lead on the work but work with a range of people and service to support meeting the needs of children and their families.

The right place

Working with families in their community or neighbourhood or their home, or where they feel most comfortable.

Levels of need

Level 1 needs - Universal

Most children, young people and families will experience challenges in their lives that impact on their wellbeing.

Most families will be able to weather these challenges (are resilient to them) either without help from services, or with advice, guidance and support from universal services, including empathy and understanding.

Level 2 needs - Universal Plus

Some children, young people and families will need support from people who know them well and have established relationships with them to meet some challenges where advice and guidance has not been enough to help the family achieve change or where a child or young person needs additional support to help them to thrive.

Level 3 needs - Intensive

A small number of children, young people and families will experience significant difficulties and will need coordinated support from experts working with them to find sustainable solutions that reduce the impact of challenge on the wellbeing and development of children and young people.

Level 4 needs - Specialist

In exceptional cases families need specialist, statutory support that is designed to maintain or repair relationships and keep families together wherever possible.

In some very specific circumstances, the needs are so great that children need to be away from their family to ensure that they are protected from harm and in these circumstances the local authority becomes their “corporate parent”.

What does this mean in Blackpool?

The Working Well Together with Children and Families in Lancashire guide talks about how we can work with families to build on their strengths and come together across agencies to put the child at the centre of our work. It is designed to ensure that we give families who are experiencing challenges the advice, information and support they need that helps them make a positive difference to their lives.

There is an expectation that all agencies will support families early, including taking the lead professional role to co-ordinate an assessment and plan for a family. Working with the family the lead professional should bring together services that know and support the family or bring in new services to form a team around the family (TAF) to help co-ordinate support and review progress.

Support is available for all lead professionals and TAF members including advice guidance and support through the link worker team and Family Hubs.

Where a family’s needs are more complex the formal early help family support team will take the lead professional role.

- [Family Hubs](#) work across all levels.
- Early help sits across two levels – 2 and 3
- The family support team works at level three

Making a referral

Parents and professionals can make a request for support from a family worker at level 3 or social worker level 4 by completing this [Blackpool Families Rock request for support form](#).

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